

Syracuse University

SURFACE

Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects

Spring 5-1-2006

PLAYERS The first magazine dedicated to young female athletes and women's college sports fans.

Stephanie Plotino

Follow this and additional works at: https://surface.syr.edu/honors_capstone



Part of the Journalism Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

Plotino, Stephanie, "PLAYERS The first magazine dedicated to young female athletes and women's college sports fans." (2006). *Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects*. 707.

https://surface.syr.edu/honors_capstone/707

This Honors Capstone Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

PLAYERS

The first magazine dedicated to young female athletes and women's college sports fans.

Stephanie Plotino

Candidate for B.S. Degree
in Magazine Journalism with Honors

May 2006

APPROVED

Thesis Project Advisor: _____
Robert Lloyd

Second Reader: _____
William Glavin

Honors Director: _____

Honors Representative: _____

Date: _____ April 19, 2006

ABSTRACT

The involvement of women in athletics has exploded over the last 10 years. This project capitalizes on this changing dynamic by creating a prototype of a women's college sports magazine called *Players*. No such magazine currently exists in the United States, but I believe there is a market for it among teenage female athletes who are interested in women's college sports. Without *Players*, females have only male-dominated publications like *Sports Illustrated* or *ESPN* for general sports coverage, or they can read more female-friendly publications such as *Shape* and *Fitness*, which cater to an active lifestyle but do not cover sports. Women's basketball fans can read *Women's Basketball*, but it is a fairly obscure magazine that is hard to find, and it does only a mediocre job of covering women's basketball and nothing more. *Players*, however, gives young female athletes and sports fans exactly what they are looking for in a magazine: NCAA news, player profiles, workout tips, fashion advice and entertainment.

Going into this project, it was called to my attention that this generation seeks its news in short and simple messages. With that in mind, I kept the articles relatively brief and used many graphic elements and bold colors to keep my readers visually interested. I also focused--within the five broad categories mentioned previously--on topics that would grab readers' attentions and hold them there, such as sports-themed films and issues of sexuality, for example.

The goal of this magazine is to level the playing field between men's and women's sports coverage. Fans of men's sports have a seemingly endless supply of magazines to reference, while women's sports fans have only one. And no magazine provides a steady, in-depth view of women's NCAA sports. I believe, however, the time has come for fans of women's sports to have an equal opportunity to read and learn about their favorite teams and athletes, hence the creation of *Players*.

Copyright © 2006 by Stephanie Plotino

All rights reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Advice to Future Honors Students..... i
Acknowledgements..... ii
Essay..... 1
Sources Cited and Consulted..... 12

Dear Future Honors Students,

My advice to you is very simple: have fun with your project. No matter what you write or create, your honors thesis project will require a lot of work. But it can also be fun if you go about it the right way.

Most importantly, don't make yourself crazy. You will be working on your project most heavily during your senior year, which is your last chance to enjoy the heck out of everything Syracuse University has to offer. So try your best not to let your project get in the way of the rest of your life.

The thesis project creation process is extremely challenging and extremely rewarding. Do the best you can, and you will leave SU feeling as though you've created a masterpiece--and you have! Good luck!

All the best,

Stephanie Plotino

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bob Lloyd: Thank you for being my "Advisor for Everything Under the Sun." You are truly the best, and you made my academic experiences at SU better than anything I could have asked for. I will always remember the times we spent sitting in your office gossiping about sports, reminiscing about London, and sweating over my thesis project. (Oh, and thanks for having my back when I broke the news to my parents that I was going to study abroad in London instead of Florence!) And I'll never forget the day you told me (sarcastically, of course), "You want to know your biggest problem? You don't have any goals." Thank you for recognizing my potential, and thank you for always giving me the extra push to help me achieve my millions of goals. You are an inspiration to me, and I am so grateful for having met you. It all started with that damned 20-page paper in MAG205, and I haven't stopped pestering you since! Thanks for putting up with me.

Bill Glavin: Thank you for being my second reader. Thanks for teaching me how to write simply and

clearly, and thanks for teaching me the art of critical writing. Thanks for being such a tough grader and for giving me C's on my first articles in MAG406 and MAG518. I hated those grades at the time, but they surely inspired me to improve my writing. Bob Lloyd even slighted himself in deeming you the greatest professor in Newhouse. It's a tough race between you and Lloyd, so don't make me choose. But rest assured that you are a wonderful professor and that I am a better writer for having taken two classes with you.

Ellen Fitzgerald: Thank you, a million times over, for giving me unrestricted access to E.Fitz Art and to your color laser printer. Without your generosity I never would have been able to complete my project.

Gina Plotino: Thank you, Mom, for not allowing me to give up on this project. I was close to quitting and you inspired me to keep on truckin'. Thanks for passing down the sports-loving gene, because without it this project would not exist. And thank you for paying my tuition to the greatest school on Earth.

Vinny Plotino: Dad, you can take a deep breath. The tuition payments are over. I know you don't particularly love sports (to say the least), but thank you for being so proud of me and for believing in this project nonetheless.

Samantha Plotino: Thanks for letting me be your role model. Thanks for letting me be your "VQ." You're the greatest sister in the world, but you know that already. As Gwen Stefani so eloquently put it, "So different, yet so the same/ Two sisters only have their parents to blame/ It's rare that two can get along/ But when they do, they're inseparable."

Harry Jacovou: Thank you for standing by me, and thanks for taking the heat every time I let this project frustrate me. I love you!

Danielle Peterson: I was in a bind when I found out that my original name for the magazine was taken. You suggested *Players*, and the rest, as they say, is history. We have a lot of history, don't we? Thank you for everything!

Essay

Background

The involvement of women in sports has exploded over the last ten years. Yet, there is no magazine on the market for female athletes and their fans. But there should be. The time has come. That is why I created *Players*, a women's college sports magazine aimed at 12- to 19-year-old female athletes and sports fans.

Without *Players*, females looking for sports news have only male-dominated publications like *ESPN* or *Sports Illustrated* for general sports coverage. If they want something more female-friendly, they can read publications like *Shape*, *Self* or *Women's Health*, but those magazines focus on living healthy, active lifestyles and do not cover sports.

So when the time came--at the end of my sophomore year--to begin thinking about creating an honors thesis project within my magazine major, it was clear to me that I should create a women's sports magazine. Deciding which sports to cover and what audience to write for was more of a challenge, but I drew upon my own experiences for guidance.

Growing up as a female athlete, I searched high and low for the latest women's basketball news and information. I lived and breathed basketball and wanted to know all there was to know about the college game. Then, when the WNBA debuted in 1997, I couldn't get enough of the professional game.

But I was faced with a problem. There was no magazine on the market that could give me an in-depth view into the world of women's sports.

I settled for a subscription to *ESPN*, but that publication was obviously not aimed at me, and only occasionally would I come across an article about the WNBA or any of the women's NCAA sports. In addition, any workout tips in *ESPN* were meant for the biologically bigger, faster and stronger bodies of male athletes and were of little benefit to me.

Aside from being an athlete, I was also a typical teenager. I desperately wanted to look fashionable--on *and* off the court. Not only did I want to know what t-shirt to wear with what pair of jeans (which I could find in a teen magazine), I also wanted to know which sneakers would look hot with which basketball shorts.

I also wanted helpful product information. What feminine hygiene products were endorsed by other women athletes? What brand of undergarments gave the most support? How did other women athletes like myself handle the occasional blemishes caused by excessive sweating?

But I realized there was no magazine out there that covered all of those topics. I would have loved to be able to reference a publication like *Players*.

Then in 2002, a magazine called *Women's Basketball* debuted with a strong focus on the WNBA. The magazine covers some women's NCAA and girls' high school basketball, but the main focus is on WNBA news and player profiles. So with the WNBA audience now taken care of, I decided to focus my magazine on the major women's NCAA sports, keeping the spotlight on topics that would be interesting to an audience of young, up-and-coming women athletes.

Seventeen-year-old Kristy Victory fits that profile. She is a typical member of the *Players* audience. She was born into a white, middle-class, Catholic family in the suburbs outside New York City. Kristy attended Catholic school from kindergarten until eighth grade, but now attends New

Milford High School, the only public school in her town.

Kristy began playing basketball when she was six years old, and it quickly became evident that she had natural talent on the court. As an elementary school student, she participated in every league and camp available to her. She played for her grammar school, for an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) team, and in municipal and church recreational leagues. Now she is the starting shooting guard for her high school team, and in the basketball off-season, she plays soccer and softball for NMHS.

But Kristy's life is not only about sports. When she is not on the court, she also loves to spend time with her friends. A typical weekend for her includes watching movies, throwing a party or going shopping with her buddies--when she is not studying for the SATs or preparing for her junior prom.

My first duty as editor-in-chief was to think like a teenage athlete. So I thought like Kristy. If I were Kristy Victory, what would I like to read about? Five categories came to mind: NCAA news, player profiles, workout tips, fashion advice and

entertainment. Each of those five categories is featured in *Players*.

The Creation Process

In referencing existing teen publications like *Teen Vogue* and *Seventeen*, I noticed that most articles written for this age group are short, sweet and to the point. My advisor, Bob Lloyd, pointed out to me that teenagers have very short attention spans and demand instant gratification. Plus, my audience is so overcommitted with school, sports and their social lives that they do not have time to read 10-page articles. So while most magazines balance longer feature articles with shorter pieces, each of my articles takes up two magazine pages or less.

Similarly, the magazine was designed to be graphics-heavy to appeal visually to the young audience. Almost every page features more art than text because a teenager is much more likely to pay attention to a photo-driven story than to a sea of black text. I also included a 6-page photo feature, in which the only elements of text are the headline and captions.

I added to the visual interest of the magazine with my color choices. Again, I referenced the existing teen titles, and I noticed an abundance of bright colors. So I used vibrant pinks, purples, oranges and blues in my magazine. I chose those colors because they are eye-catching and are likely to help draw readers into a story.

Another conscious decision I had to make was the order in which to place the articles and ads within the magazine. Typically a magazine has shorter pieces in the front of the magazine, followed by the feature well (or a succession of longer feature stories), followed by shorter pieces in the back of the magazine. I followed that format exactly, since it traditionally works for most magazines.

My toughest decision was deciding where to place my 6-page photo essay. Because it is so long, my first reaction was to place it at the beginning of the feature well. Ultimately, however, Professor Lloyd convinced me to put it near the back of the magazine so that someone who starts flipping from the back would come across the photos and be drawn into the rest of the magazine.

I also had to think realistically about the ads I included in my magazine. My magazine does not exist in the "real" magazine market, so I did not have advertisers looking to promote their brands within my pages. Instead, I had to think about what types of companies would be likely to advertise in this kind of magazine, and then solicit them.

I thought most companies would jump at the chance to advertise for free. Plus, I'm a magazine journalism student, so I thought most places would welcome an opportunity to promote learning in the field. But I was wrong. Finding advertisers was one of the most time-consuming aspects of my project. Many companies denied my requests because they outsourced their advertising to an agency and were not authorized to grant me permission to use their ads. Others denied my requests and offered no explanation.

In creating the prototype of *Players*, I had an almost endless supply of publications to reference for tips, tricks and ideas. As I mentioned previously, I relied heavily on teen publications for graphics-related and article-formatting tips. I also used women's fashion magazines as inspiration

for my designs and layouts, especially on my fashion pages. I wanted to keep the focus on the clothes and shoes, and the ideas I borrowed from fashion magazines allowed me to do just that. My "Pretty in Pink" and "Hot Style: Spring Footwear" pieces were inspired by *Glamour* and *Cosmopolitan*.

As much as I chastise *Sports Illustrated* for not sufficiently covering women's sports, I was able to learn from the publication. I used their regular "Leading Off" photo feature as inspiration for my "Photos of Women Doing Amazing Things in Sports" photo feature. The photos in *Sports Illustrated* are such high-quality action shots that most readers cannot help but look at them. It made sense, then, for me to include a similar piece in my magazine as my audience is so much more attracted to photos than text.

Finally, and arguably most importantly, I turned to *Women's Health* for inspiration for my cover. The cover is what sells the magazine, so of all the pages, my cover had to be the most appealing.

My first attempts at creating the cover failed miserably. I tried to do too much with it, and it

looked cluttered and disorganized. Then I found an issue of *Women's Health*, and something clicked. Placing the cover model against a white background and surrounding her with bold cover lines was exactly the look I was going for. My cover is not an exact replica of a *Women's Health* cover because I did not want to plagiarize. Plus I wanted the cover to showcase my own unique style. I was, however, inspired greatly by *Women's Health*.

As to my writing style, I did not model my approach after any particular journalist or magazine. Instead, I put to use all of the skills I have learned and perfected over the past four years at Newhouse. My critical writing class, for example, prepared me to write the reviews of *A League of their Own* and *Bend it like Beckham*. My magazine article writing class prepared me to write the feature story about the NCAA's anniversaries. And my magazine editing class prepared me to write the headlines and cover lines.

The Mission

I believe wholeheartedly in the mission of *Players*. I created this magazine because I am an

advocate for equal rights and opportunities, especially in the shadow of Title IX. I believe women's sports fans should have periodicals that promote their favorite sports, teams and athletes.

In a world where there is no other magazine like it, the purpose of *Players* is to empower young, female sports fans. I wanted to create a magazine specifically for female athletes and sports fans.

Conclusion

I created this magazine because of my passion for sports and my compassion for young women like me. I wanted a magazine like *Players* when I was competing, but I never had one. By taking on this challenge, I was able to fill a void in my life. I was also able to fill a void in the lives of today's young female athletes and sports fans.

If you are reading this essay and you are a target member of my audience, I hope you will read through *Players* and thoroughly enjoy it. I also hope that one day you will find the magazine on newsstands all around the country.

If you are not a member of my target audience, you probably know someone who would benefit from a

magazine like this. And so you understand why it was so important for me to create it. Please pass on a copy of *Players* to your favorite female athlete or sports fan, and let her enjoy the first sports magazine written and designed exclusively for her.

It is my hope that everyone comes away from the magazine feeling as though it speaks to them. And, more importantly, I hope everyone comes away from it feeling as though *Players* levels the playing field.

SOURCES CITED AND CONSULTED

- Associated Press Photo Archive. Accunet/AP
Multimedia Archive. Accessed repeatedly 2005-
06.
<<http://ap.accuweather.com.libezproxy2.syr.edu>>
- Blau, Jon and Andrew Staub. "Ex-Lady Lion says
Portland made anti-gay remarks." Daily
Collegian 29 Dec. 2005.
- Buttry, Missy. E-mail interview. E-mail to Stephanie
Plotino. 7 Feb. 2006.
- Buzinski, Jim. "Homophobia Alleged in University of
Florida Softball: Player Says She Was Released
Because She Is a Lesbian; School Defends
Coaches." OutSports.com 31 May 2003.
<[http://www.outsports.com/campus/20030521andrea
zimbardi.htm](http://www.outsports.com/campus/20030521andrea_zimbardi.htm)> Accessed 9 Feb. 2006.
- Cheek, Joy. E-mail interview. E-mail to Stephanie
Plotino. 4 Oct. 2005.
- Cronan, Joan. Telephone interview. Telephone call
from Stephanie Plotino. 12 Jan 2006.
- De Jong, Adam. "Gay athletes at UCLA feel isolated
on, off field." Daily Bruin 12 Apr. 2005.
- Dent, Gail. "NCAA names Division III women's
volleyball 25th anniversary team." NCAA.org 1
Nov. 2005.
<[http://www.ncaa.org/wps/portal/!ut/p/kcxml/04_
Sj9SPykssy0xPLMnMz0vM0Y_QjzKLN4j3CQXJgFjGpvqRqC
KOcAFfj_zcVH1v_QD9gtzQiHJHRUUAc0tpTA!!/delta/ba
se64xml/L3dJdyEvUUd3QndNQSEvNElVRS82XzBfTFU!?CO
NTENT_URL=http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/media_and
_events/press_room/2005/november/20051101_diiiv
b25thanniv.html](http://www.ncaa.org/wps/portal/!ut/p/kcxml/04_Sj9SPykssy0xPLMnMz0vM0Y_QjzKLN4j3CQXJgFjGpvqRqC KOcAFfj_zcVH1v_QD9gtzQiHJHRUUAc0tpTA!!/delta/base64xml/L3dJdyEvUUd3QndNQSEvNElVRS82XzBfTFU!?CONTENT_URL=http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/media_and_events/press_room/2005/november/20051101_diiivb25thanniv.html)> Accessed 15 Dec. 2005.
- Dent, Gail. "NCAA Hall of Champions celebrates
centennial with a Century of Champions
exhibit." NCAA.org 5 Jan. 2006.
<[http://www.ncaa.org/wps/portal/!ut/p/kcxml/04_
Sj9SPykssy0xPLMnMz0vM0Y_QjzKLN4j3CQXJgFjGpvqRqC](http://www.ncaa.org/wps/portal/!ut/p/kcxml/04_Sj9SPykssy0xPLMnMz0vM0Y_QjzKLN4j3CQXJgFjGpvqRqC)

KOCAFfj_zcVHlv_QD9gtzQiHJHRUUAc0tpTA!!/delta/base64xml/L3dJdyEvUUD3QndNQSEvNELVRS82XzBfTFU!?CONTENT_URL=http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/media_and_events/press_room/2006/january/20060105_century_rls.html> Accessed 31 Jan. 2006.

Gay.com/PlanetOut.com Network. "US Court: High schools can't out gay pupils." Gay.com 2 Dec. 2005. <<http://uk.gay.com/headlines/9330>> Accessed 9 Feb. 2006.

GettyImages.com. Getty Images. Accessed repeatedly 2005-06. <<http://www.gettyimages.com>>

Johnson, Greg. "Silver anniversary of NCAA women's championships reflects proud past, projects bright future." NCAA News Online 24 Oct. 2005. <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/portal/legacysiteviewer?CONTENT_URL=http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/media_and_events/association_news/ncaa_news_online/2005/10_24_05/front_page_news/4222n27.html> Accessed 6 Dec. 2005.

LadyFootLocker.com. Lady Foot Locker. Accessed 16 Oct. 2005. <<http://www.ladyfootlocker.com>>

Leonardi, Pam. E-mail interview. E-mail to Stephanie Plotino. 9 Feb. 2006.

Mitchell, Bridgette. Telephone interview. Telephone call from Stephanie Plotino. 7 Oct. 2005.

MyPyramid.gov. Steps to a Healthier You. United States Department of Agriculture. Accessed 7 Jan 2006. <<http://www.mypyramid.gov>>

NCAA. "Centennial Happenings." NCAA.org. <http://web1.ncaa.org/cent/happenings_Active.jsp> Accessed 20 Jan 2006.

NCAA. "Fact Sheet." NCAA.org. <http://web1.ncaa.org/cent/mediaKit_FactSheet.jsp> Accessed 20 Nov. 2005.

NCAA. "NCAA celebrates 25th anniversary of women's

championships." NCAAsports.com 13 Oct. 2005.
<<http://www.ncaasports.com/story/8960986>>
Accessed 17 Dec. 2005.

NCAA.org. The Online Resource for the National
Collegiate Athletic Association. National
Collegiate Athletic Association. Accessed
repeatedly 2005-06. <<http://www.ncaa.org>>

NCAAsports.com. National Collegiate Athletic
Association. Accessed repeatedly 2005-06.
<<http://www.ncaasports.com>>

Norton, Jill. E-mail interview. E-mail to Stephanie
Plotino. 8 Feb. 2006.

Perry, Krista. Telephone interview. Telephone call
from Stephanie Plotino. 13 April 2006.

PLAYERS

The first magazine dedicated to young female athletes and women's college sports fans.

Business Plan

Stephanie Plotino, Editor-In-Chief

324 Marguerite Street

New Milford, NJ 07646

(551) 574-0373

Table of Contents

Mission Statement.....	3
Target Audience.....	3
Editorial Vision.....	5
Circulation Marketing Strategy.....	8
Potential Ancillary Products.....	10
Advertising Sales Strategy.....	12
The Stages of our Business.....	13
Experts Who Will Help Us.....	16
Financial Plan.....	18

Mission Statement:

Our mission at *Players* is to provide young female athletes and women's college sports fans with a fun, informative and inspirational magazine catering to our audience's interests. We believe that women and men should have the same opportunities to read and learn about their favorite collegiate athletes, and in order to make that goal a reality, our magazine is dedicated to providing our audience with an intelligent and in-depth view of the most popular women's college sports and athletes while keeping the feel of the magazine fun, fresh and upbeat.

Target Audience:

- *Gender*: predominately female
- *Age*: 12 to 19 years old
- *Ethnicity*: mostly white, with attention being paid to the growing population of Latina athletes
- *Economic class*: middle class with a disposable income

- *Location:* national, including major university areas where women's college sports are already popular or are growing in popularity
- *Other identifying markers:*
 - Athletes (former or current)

Seventeen-year-old Kristy Victory is a typical member of our target audience. She was born into a white, middle-class, Catholic family in the suburbs of New York City. Kristy attended Catholic school from kindergarten to eighth grade, but when it came time for high school, she decided to attend New Milford High School, the only public school in her town.

Kristy began playing basketball when she was six years old, and it quickly became evident that she had natural talent on the court. As an elementary school student, she participated in every league and every camp available to her. She played for her grammar school, for an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) team, and in a recreational league.

The end of Kristy's eighth grade year rolled around, and it was time for her to decide whether she wanted to stay in Catholic school or make the

jump to public school. She ultimately decided on New Milford High School because she knew she could make an immediate impact on the girls' basketball team there, and she knew she would be surrounded by a group of fundamentally-sound players—a new phenomenon for NMHS.

Kristy just completed her junior season at NMHS, where she recently scored her 1,000th point. She is beginning to look at colleges, and college scouts are beginning to look at her. She is not sure yet where she wants to play basketball, but she knows that she does not want her career to end after high school.

Editorial Vision:

Players is dedicated to providing its readers with a comprehensive, fun and intelligent magazine full of articles relating to women's college sports. Our coverage ranges from Division I to Division III teams and spans all four seasons of the year.

Before *Players*, the sports magazine market did not house a magazine catering specifically to the wants and needs of young, female women's college

sports fans. Instead, females had to turn to the male-dominated publications such as *Sports Illustrated* and *ESPN* for general sports coverage, or they could read more female-friendly publications such as *Shape* and *Fitness*, which cater to an active lifestyle but do not cover sports. For a brief time, *Sports Illustrated for Women* was available, but its editorial was too similar to that of the fitness magazines. It did not offer the female outlook on the field of sports, which was—and still is—missing from the sports magazine market. Had it offered that new, fresh outlook, however, it may have stayed alive. Instead, it folded a few short years after its inception.

Slightly more successful at staying afloat has been *Women's Basketball*, which covers NCAA women's and WNBA basketball. While it does a decent job of covering women's basketball topics, each issue of the magazine is only approximately 35 pages long and costs \$4.99 per month on the newsstand. Its poor backing of advertisers is probably the reason behind the expensive price tag (in comparison to a 345-page *Marie Claire* for \$3.50, for example), and the expensive price tag is probably the reason the

publication's readership has not grown as much as it potentially could.

With *Players*, however, young fans of women's college sports—as well as young female athletes—now have a magazine to reference for all things sports. Because of its young audience, the magazine will include more than just news and feature articles. Young people tend to have shorter attention spans than adults, which has influenced our decision to include only a few lengthy feature articles placed carefully among the more prominent shorter articles, advertisements and for-fun pieces. For fun, each issue will include a sports-related crossword puzzle and horoscope. That is not to say, however, that our magazine will lack depth or newsworthiness.

The topic of Title IX—the Education Amendment of 1972 which states, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...”—is an important one in the world of women's sports, and new issues relating to gender inequality are surfacing every day. As a result, we

will work to go in-depth into topics relating to Title IX and other relevant current events. As the group most greatly affected by the amendment, our readers have a right to be as well-informed about the Title IX as possible, as we will work hard to make that happen.

Every issue of the magazine will also include athlete interviews in the form of Q&A and pre-season product reviews.

Circulation Marketing Strategy:

Players will be marketed most strongly in the areas surrounding college and university campuses where women's sports are popular. Free issues of the magazine will be passed out at sporting events where the home team either has a history of winning or has recently won a championship. Teams with a history of winning generally have dedicated fans who are interested in knowing all there is to know about their favorite teams and players. This group is a prime target for us because the mission of our magazine fits into exactly what they are looking for: the most cutting-edge, up-to-date and insider

information available. Dedicated fans, therefore, are the most likely potential consumers of our magazine. Newly enthusiastic fans, similarly, are usually looking for a source from which they can find out as much as possible about their newfound passion. The enthusiasm that comes along with the honeymoon stage, of sorts, is something we are counting on to provide us with potential readers.

A city like Hartford, Conn., for example, is a prime target for our publication, thanks to the winning tradition of the University of Connecticut Lady Huskies' basketball team. And Knoxville, Tenn., traditionally known for its women's basketball team, is now a prime city for finding newly enthusiastic women's indoor track and field fans, thanks to the University of Tennessee Lady Vols' first-ever championship in 2005.

Young Latina girls are another major marketing group for *Players*. According to a *USA Today* article, "In October 2002, the Census reported there were 1.8 million Hispanic females ages 14 to 19." While only approximately 20% of them are currently active in high school sports according to the United States Census Bureau, if Kennedy High School (Grenada, Ca.)

athletic director Rae Brittain is correct, "The tides are definitely changing." She told *USA Today*, "In the past you didn't see that many Hispanic women (athletes). You will in the coming years start to see multitudes of them." To target this group, therefore, the magazine will be marketed in places such as Austin, TX, and Albuquerque, NM. The two locations are major university cities in two of the most Hispanic-populated states of the country. To get at this group, free copies of the magazine will be distributed at University of Texas and University of New Mexico basketball games. Free copies will also be given to surrounding high schools with large populations of middle-class Latina students.

Potential Ancillary Products:

The premier issue of *Players* will come with a free sample of Clean & Clear® Oil Absorbing Sheets, which come in a small re-sealable package and which can be easily transported in a gym bag and used after a sporting event to clear the face of excess oil. This product will appeal to our audience because many young, active females battle acne due

to pores that are clogged with dirt and sweat, and this Clean & Clear® product is a potential remedy for that common problem.

Like the Clean & Clear® sheets, other products aimed at our target audience will also be included in the magazine as free samples each month. Ancillary products are an excellent cross-promotional tool for us and for our advertisers. Free gifts—which are much more common in the United Kingdom than they are here in the United States—often catch the attention of potential buyers at the newsstand, increasing the odds of a magazine purchase; and a Clean & Clear® Oil Absorbing Sheets consumer, for example, may carry her loyalty over from the product to our publication if she sees that her favorite brand respects our publication enough to advertise within it. Additionally, our advertisers can use our growing loyalty of readers as a potential pool from which to, in turn, grab loyal consumers of their own.

Advertising Sales Strategies:

As the only magazine on the market targeting our specific audience, we can offer our potential advertisers something that no one else can—young female athletes and young female college sports fans with disposable incomes. Whether they are teenagers earning weekly allowances from their parents, or recent high school or college graduates making money at their first real jobs, they have money to spend on magazines and on other products in the mainstream market. And money to spend—even more than our distinct target audience—is what our advertisers are most interested in.

Teen girls' magazines are a hot market currently, and all of the magazines are full of ads from major companies; so our potential advertisers certainly do not have a shortage of publications from which to choose. Our publication is at an advantage, however, because we are introducing these potential advertisers to a whole new niche of the teenage girl demographic: athletes and sports fans. With such a defined audience, potential advertisers will never have to question exactly who their ads are reaching.

As a new magazine, major companies may not be aware of the opportunity to advertise through us. We will, however, contact major athletic wear brands (e.g., Nike, Adidas, Puma, Reebok, and Champion), major colleges and universities, the Basketball Hall of Fame and the AAU Girls' Basketball organization as potential advertisers. We also plan to contact other companies that put out products that appeal to our target audience, such as cosmetic companies, sports drink companies and electronics companies. Johnson & Johnson, ACE[®] Bandages, Revlon, Clairol, L'Oreal, Gatorade, PowerAde, Apple and Sony are all potential advertisers.

The Stages of our Business:

As we prepare for the launch of our premier issue, the most important steps for us to take are to make our name known within the women's college sports community and to establish a loyal following of readers in order to appear more attractive to potential advertisers. Achieving these goals will depend on the success of our circulation marketing strategy.

Once we establish a trusting relationship with our advertisers, we hope the loyal consumers of the products advertised in our magazine will feel confident that we are a credible source for women's college basketball information. They should be able to believe their favorite companies would not invest in an unworthy publication. More importantly, however, we will begin to build direct relationships with our readers, not just via advertisers. The editor-in-chief and managing editor will make appearances at women's college sporting events around the country to help hand out free issues of the magazine and to hear what people have to say about the publication.

Moreover, the first twelve issues of the magazine will include a survey for readers to fill out and send back to us. We want to know what our readers think about the quality of *Players's* editorial content and how they feel about the layout, tone, cover art and for-fun pieces in the magazine. If our readers are happy, we are doing our job; if they are unhappy, we need to re-focus and give them what they are looking for. We do, after all, exist for the benefit of our readers.

As our magazine develops and our audience begins to grow and change, *Players* will have to make a decision: Do we grow and change with our readers, or do we keep our mission the same and target a new generation of readers? Growing and changing with our existing readers would mean that our solid readership would remain constant, but the focus of and the advertisers in our publication would have to shift. This could be exactly the right move for the publication, or it could be dangerous. There is always the chance that the publication could stray too far from the original focus or that not enough new companies would be willing to invest in the publication. To avoid such circumstances, we would have to make sure we could retain the proper backing before choosing this option.

Not changing with our audience, on the other hand, could produce similar or other effects. By keeping our focus and our advertising constant, we would have to target a whole new group of people. Once again, this could be the correct move for the magazine; or it could be dangerous because the newest generation of female athletes and women's college basketball fans may not show an interest in

the magazine, and previously loyal advertisers may, therefore, lose their reason for investing in the publication. We would have to be very certain that the new generation would pick up our magazine before choosing this option.

In conclusion, the success of our publication will depend heavily on how well we are able to listen to and interpret what our readers want. It will also depend on how well we are able to reflect upon our own ideas for the magazine when it comes time to make a decision about whether or not to go in a new direction.

Experts Who Will Help Us:

During the Spring 2006 semester, two separate issues of *Players* will be included as a free supplement in the major campus newspapers of the following most recent National Championship schools:

- Baylor University (basketball; singles tennis),
- Brown University (rowing),
- Northwestern University (lacrosse; doubles tennis),

- Notre Dame University (fencing; soccer),
- Stanford University (volleyball),
- University of California at Los Angeles (water polo),
- University of Colorado (cross country),
- University of Denver (skiing),
- University of Georgia (swimming & diving; gymnastics),
- University of Miami [Fl.] (golf),
- University of Michigan (softball),
- University of Minnesota (ice hockey),
- University of Nebraska (bowling),
- University of Tennessee (track & field),
- U.S. Military Academy (rifle), and
- Wake Forest University (field hockey)

The purpose of including our magazine in those schools' newspapers is to spread the word about the magazine in the places where women's college sports are currently at a high level of recognition. We hope the sense of pride in their schools' championships will cause students to pick up a copy

of our magazine to find out the latest information about their successful teams.

Financial Plan:

Printing and distribution will be our biggest costs. For 300,000 copies of a 32-page magazine (plus 4 pages of cover) in full-color on high-quality glossy paper, printing will cost \$131,248 per issue. If we print ten issues per year, our yearly printing cost will be \$1,312,480.

To mail 250,000 of our 300,000 copies to subscribers via second-class mail, it will cost us \$87,916 per issue or \$879,160 per year.

The total yearly cost for printing and distribution is \$2,191,636. Salaries are to be determined.

To offset those costs, we are selling full-page advertisements at \$10,000 a piece. We are also selling our magazine for \$1.99 per issue on the newsstand, or \$1.25 per issue via subscriptions.

If we sell 12 ads per magazine, and if we sell 300,000 copies per month, we will make back \$5,320,000 per year.